**Session 7: Importance of Implementing Literacy Development**  
**Read the following questions, and post your responses to the discussion board.**

1. Discuss the need for multilevel, flexible, and small –group instruction.

*Multilevel, flexible, small group instruction is very important within the ELA classroom. These types of groups allow teachers to provide a more individualized approach to students. A student who struggles and needs small-group instruction in one skill area may not require it in another. This is why it is so important for teachers to utilize formative assessments to evaluate their students’ progress and to offer flexible grouping as needed. Often times, just a few minutes of additional instruction provided in a small group is all that is required to enable a student to master a skill. Teachers can also use grouping to provide the opportunity for students who excel to be challenged in a particular area.*

2. List and discuss the importance of professional development in literacy in all content areas.

*Quality professional development in literacy in the content areas is imperative. Our content area teachers must be given the tools to enable them to confidently address literacy within the context of their subject area. This professional development must be ongoing and involve the assistance of reading specialists and/or district literacy coaches. The teachers need to know there are people available who will offer advice and assistance. In addition, they need to be given materials and resources that make implementing literacy activities realistically achievable.*

3. Explain and discuss the importance of approaching reading and writing as a developmental process.

*Reading and writing are both developmental processes. There are underlying foundational skills that students must possess in order to succeed at higher-level reading and writing skills. At sixth grade, some students can tackle higher-level thinking with ease while others struggle to answer the most explicit of questions. As teachers, we need to fully understand where our students are developmentally so that we can challenge them without frustrating them. For example, if a student struggles to write a coherent paragraph, why would we ask them to write a five-paragraph essay? Clearly, they are not developmentally ready for such an assignment. I think the biggest mistake a teacher can make is not identifying and/or understanding the developmental level of the students in front of them.*

4. Discuss the importance of teachers learning more about their students as readers and writers.

*Learning more about our students as readers and writers goes hand in hand with understanding their developmental level. We have to know who our students are in order to help them progress. I have many students who tell me they “hate” to read. I believe that, in reality, reading has simply never been more than a chore to them and they just have never zeroed in on what aspects of reading and writing they might actually enjoy. If I asked them their favorite novel, for example, many would not be able to name one. Therefore, it is not just a matter of teachers learning more about their students, but also students learning what interests and excites them. Sadly, in many respects I think we have taken the joy out of reading and writing for our students. In our quest to provide data-driven instruction, we have lost sight of the importance of fostering a love of reading and writing.*

5. What are your thoughts regarding the link below and the set up of a differentiated classroom and lessons.

*I think the ideal ELA classroom would be set up the way it is described in the FCRR document. The concept of providing whole group instruction within the ELA block followed by centers where students can work in small groups, pairs, or individually makes sense to me. The two types of groups they outline, guided reading and skill-based, make sense to me as well. In reality, however, it is easier said than done, especially within the constraints placed upon teachers in some districts as far pacing goes. In a district in which your progress through a core program is closely monitored, it is very difficult to institute such a system. In my situation, we mostly focus on skill-based groups as we need to prepare the students for the weekly assessments they will be given. I think incorporating guided reading, however, would be one way to inject the love of reading back into the classroom. It is also a way to differentiate according to reading level and allow students to work with materials that allow for success while still offering a challenge appropriate for their level.*